

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and further and favorable consideration of the subject application in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

By the present amendment, a new Abstract has been submitted. The new Abstract is in appropriate narrative form and largely mirrors the previous abstract, with reference numerals and legalese omitted. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0056655 to Cottingham *et al.*, hereinafter Cottingham, in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,674,634 to Wilson, hereinafter Wilson. The Examiner asserts that Cottingham describes a wrapping cover with absorbent articles individually wrapped and stacked in a wrapping container, but does not disclose where the wrapping covers are adhered to one another "at their ends as claimed". With regard to that point, applicant submits that at least claim 1 does not require adhering "at the ends" as implied by the examiner.

The Examiner further alleges that Wilson discloses such a stack of bags and that one skilled in the art would be motivated by Wilson to modify the Cottingham publication to keep the articles together and to protect the adhesive from contamination before use. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Referring to Figures 1 and 3, an embodiment of the presently claimed invention includes a stack of absorbent articles 130 wherein the lid part 111 of the wrapping cover 100 of a second absorbent article 101 is attached to the wrapping cover 100' of a first adhesive article 101' by a releasable attachment 133 that is stronger than the attachment 120 between the lid part 111 and the container part

112 on the wrapping cover of the second absorbent article. However, the present invention is not limited to the illustrated embodiments.

The presently claimed invention refers to two different adhesive/sealing/connection means of different strength. See, for example, the embodiments described in the present specification at least in paragraphs [0007] and [0033]-[0039] and as exemplified in Figures 3-6, this feature enables one or more of the wrapping covers to be opened automatically when detached from another absorbent article's wrapping cover.

Referring to Figures 1-4 of Wilson, this publication describes reclosable plastic bags in which the adhesive (e.g., 9 or 12) that will be used to close an individual bag upon use is the same adhesive (i.e., 9 or 12) that is used to adhere separate bags (e.g., 5 and 15) together in the multi-bag package. Thus, this orientation provides the benefit and the seeming necessity of keeping the adhesive free from contamination so that one is able to close the individual bag once dispensed as described in col. 3, ll. 8-54 and Figures 1-3 of Wilson. In contrast, the presently claimed invention uses two different attachments— one to close the wrapping cover around an individual absorbent article and one to adhere a first and second absorbent article together in a stack. Moreover, these two attachments differ in their relative strength; a feature that would not be present or suggested by Wilson as this publication only uses one adhesive means.

Cottingham is directed to packaging for absorbent articles with “appropriately sized pocket[s] and opening[s].” See paragraph [0006]. Cottingham states that whether the individual articles are wrapped or unwrapped in the larger package is unimportant. See paragraph [0026]. This fact suggests that one skilled in the art

would not be motivated by Cottingham to use two attachments of varying strengths to assist in opening individual absorbent packages upon dispensing, an advantage of the presently claimed invention. As is the case with Wilson, Cottingham discloses or suggests no such thing. Nor is there any disclosure or suggestion of any sort of adhesive that would need to be protected from contamination prior to use in Cottingham, as the Examiner asserts. See Office Action, page 3. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation to combine Wilson and Cottingham, and further even if one skilled in the art did combine these two references, such a combination would not result in the presently claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that all currently pending claims fully comply with 35 U.S.C. § 103. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection. In the event that there are any questions concerning this response, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL PC

Date: July 5, 2006

By: /WCRowland/
William C. Rowland
Registration No. 30888

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404
703.836.6620